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Brief History of the Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SOCIETY FOR ANCIENT GREEK
PHILOSOPHY 1953-62

The idea for the Society originated in a conversation between George Burch, Constantine Cavarnos, and the present secretary at the meetings of the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association in December, 1952. The first meeting, at which the Society was billed as the Presocratic Society, was held on December 28, 1953 at the University of Rochester. About forty persons assembled to hear and discuss John Robinson's paper on Anaximander and, under the chairmanship of the late Hillis Kaiser, to constitute themselves the SAGP. Two officers were elected (Gregory Vlastos, president, and Rosamond Kent Sprague, secretary) and the field of interest defined as "Greek philosophy down to and including Aristotle". (In 1954 the members voted to extend the field to include the post-Aristotelians and neo-Platonism). The membership of the Society at the time of the 1954 meeting was 64; gradual yearly increases have brought the numbers to approximately 125. Membership dues were and have remained at one dollar. The Society was \$.06 indebt the first year but has since been solvent to the extent of a figure which is usually between one and two hundred dollars. The main expenses of the group have always been the mimeographing and distribution of papers. This distribution of papers (in advance of the actual meetings) is really the most important function of the SAGP in that it has kept the standard of both writing and discussion high, and has also supplied what nearly amounts to a small journal in ancient philosophy to many persons unable to attend the sessions. (Copies have gone as far as Brazil). The Society at one time considered issuing a journal of its own, but decided in stead to lend its active support to the new English journal, Phronesis. During 1954 and 1955 the secretary worked closely with Professors D.J. Allan and G.B Kerferd and with Van Gorcum on publicity for this project. In 1955 the Society decided to request the American Philological Association for facilities similar to those which it had received from the philosophers and in this way to strengthen the philological side of its activities. Since 1955, therefore, there have been two sessions except when unity of place has made a joint session possible, as in 1956 and 1959. No distinction has been made however between the types of papers to be presented at the two sessions: the classicists have assumed a knowledge of philosophical issues and the philosophers a knowledge of Greek. Practice at the sessions has varied; at one time commentators were regularly appointed, whereas, more recently, the chairman has simply called, with success, for general discussion. Officers are listed below: PRESIDENTS: G. Vlastos, G.R. Morrow, L. Edelstein, R. Demos, P. Merlan (twice), F. Solmsen, J.B. McDiarmid, J.H. Randall, jr. SECRETARIES: J. Robinson, R.K. Sprague. CHAIRMEN FOR CLASSICAL SECTION: E.L. Minar, jr., P. DeLacy. Commentators have been: L. Edelstein, R. Albritton, G. Vlastos, R.K. Sprague, E.L. Minar, jr., P. Merlan, H.W. Miller, T.G. Rosenmeyer. Meetings have customarily been chaired by the president, secretary or co-chairman; also L. Woodbury. The nominating committee has usually consisted of a number of past presidents, especially G. Vlastos. H. Cherniss has also served. The names of the various speakers are to be found on the accompanying bibliography. Floreat SAGP!

R.K.S.

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(Note: this listing is of necessity incomplete. Additions and corrections for a revised version will be gratefully received).

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